



## APRIL 2024 NEWSLETTER

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(844) 467-1299

### *Weekly Schedule*

**Worship Service: Sun. 10:15am**  
Hybrid Worship in Person &  
Streamed via Zoom and Facebook Live  
<https://www.fcclc.org/worship>

**Contemplative Worship Service**  
1st Sunday of the month, 6:30pm  
In-person only at this time.

**Social Hours: Wed. 6:30pm**  
1st Wed: Crafters Group  
3rd Wed: Adult Education Group

**Spiritual Practices: Thu. 9:00am**  
Every Thursday on Zoom  
Some practices we do regularly:  
Lectio Divina, Centering Prayer, Christian  
Meditation, Bible Journaling, Scripture  
Doodling, Book Discussion, and more!

## *Announcements*

- » We have lifted all the Covid restrictions. The CDC has removed the Covid restrictions and rates of infection are low in the area. This means we do not require or request persons wear masks. It is up to your discretion if you wish to wear a mask. We are also returning to indoor coffee hour and potlucks.
- » The Pastoral Search Committee has finished collecting responses to measure the congregation's priorities for a long term pastor. They will now be analyzing the results to better inform their search moving forward.
- » To limit the length of the newsletter, the FCC Board Meeting Minutes are published as a separate document, available at <https://www.fcclc.org/community/>

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# WORSHIP COVENANT

In order to ensure that worship is a safe space for everyone who wants to return, we ask that you covenant with us to abide by the following safety guidelines:

- » While you may choose to wear a mask, they are no longer required or requested by FCC at this time. We may adjust this decision in the future based on the numbers.
- » Worship leaders, musicians, and speakers are strongly encouraged to be vaccinated.
- » We ask that you wear your name tag or a disposable name tag, available by the front doors.
- » Please maintain a six-foot distance between you and other members at all times when indoors.
- » When you enter, please take a bulletin, then find a spot to sit.
- » The Communion bread and wine are served row by row. Please accept the elements and pass the trays to your neighbor.
- » After the final hymn please make your way outside, taking your bulletin and any trash with you. There will be trash cans by the sanctuary doors

## NOTES

This covenant will change as recommended safety measures in our county change. We will communicate any changes through email blasts and in person announcements.

The livestream recording begins at 10:10 am. At that time, any sounds above a whisper may be heard on the livestream. Anyone who gathers near the front of the sanctuary may be visible on camera.

If you have any questions about the covenant, please contact Rev. Patrick..



# CALENDAR

## WEEKLY SCHEDULE

## BIRTHDAYS

Sun.	10:15 am	First Christian Church Worship	
	10:15 am	St. John's Catholic Church Worship	<b>4/9</b>
Mon.	6:30 pm	Celestial Sounds (Sanctuary)	Linda Weather
Wed.	6:30 pm	FCC Social Hour (Parlor)	
	6:30 pm	Mesilla Valley Swing (Sanctuary)	<b>4/23</b>
Thu.	9:00 am	Spiritual Practices/Book Club (Zoom)	Jeanne Knotts
Fri.	12:00 pm	Al-Anon (Parlor)	
	6:00 pm	New World Drummers / Dancers	
Sat.	8:00am	HIV/AIDS Food Bank	

## SPECIAL SERVICES

4/7            6:30 pm    Contemplative Worship (Chapel)

## SOCIAL GROUPS

4/3            6:30 pm    Crafters Group  
4/17          11:30 am   Brown Bag Lunch  
4/24          6:30 pm    Book Discussion Group

## EVENTS

4/5            5:30 pm    Food Pantry Support Group  
4/19          5:30 pm    Food Pantry Support Group  
4/20          10:00 am   Weaving for Justice Sale

## MEETINGS

4/20          10:00 am   FCC Board Meeting  
4/11          6:00 pm    Pastor Search Committee (Parlor)  
4/25          6:00 pm    Pastor Search Committee (Parlor)

# *ELDERS & WORSHIP LEADERS*

*April, 2024*

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***Sunday, Apr. 7 10:15 am***

Worship Leader: Hilda McKee  
Offering: Esther Devall  
Communion: Deb Cook

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***Sunday, Apr. 14 10:15 am***

Worship Leader: Karen Holmes  
Offering: Scott Hays-Strom  
Communion: Esther Devall

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***Sunday, Apr. 21 10:15 am***

Worship Leader: Melissa McKenzy-Shaw  
Offering: Zanté Garcia  
Communion: Paul Cook

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***Sunday, Apr. 28 10:15 am***

Worship Leader: Jeanne Knotts  
Offering: Kamy McKenzy-Shaw  
Communion: Zanté Garcia

*May, 2024*

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***Sunday, May 5 10:15 am***

Worship Leader: Deb Cook  
Offering: Paul Cook  
Communion: Kamy McKenzy-Shaw

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***Sunday, May 12 10:15 am***

Worship Leader: Esther Devall  
Offering: Debby Johnson  
Communion: Scott Hays-Strom

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***Sunday, May 19 10:15 am***

Worship Leader: Eric Hays-Strom  
Offering: Melissa McKenzy-Shaw  
Communion: Debby Johnson

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***Sunday, May 26 10:15 am***

Worship Leader: Zanté Garcia  
Offering: Paul Cook  
Communion: Melissa McKenzy-Shaw

# NEWS & LETTERS

## *PASTOR'S LETTER*

*Rev. Patrick Crocker*

Having completed our Lenten journey (for now), how do we experience our Easter season? What have we set down that we now re-evaluate highly, and hold on to dearly? What have we set down, only to pick up as a mere tool, to be held more lightly than before we started on this journey?

Contrary to my experiences in both public school and in the world of commerce, Easter is a season rather than a day. (The empire's collapsing of seven weeks of living out resurrection into a single day of sugar-filled rush is probably worth a sermon or two, but another time.) Within the Easter season, we remember and live out the various experiences of resurrection in the early Church and in our own lives.

For some of us, we are glad to stop a while in Jerusalem. We are recovering from the sometimes arduous journey of Lent and then the emotionally intense Holy Week. Three days alone in the dark with the door closed can sound like a welcome vacation.

Others are feeling flush with vindication, that the hopes we had put so much time/sweat/tears into had revealed themselves to be worthwhile after all. If we are honest, we admit that the light of Easter shows a rather different geography than we had thought we'd see. (I think of when I got glasses in the 5th grade and, suddenly, my teacher's handwriting on the class chalkboard was so much better!)

Some are experiencing new life and new meaning around the tables in our homes, as though we were eating with completely new companions (literally, "those with whom we break bread"). Others continue the journey, feeling uneasy at resting in one place for too long, but finding meaning and new life around those with whom we share the road.

Thankfully, Easter is a season and that allows us to grow into and grow beyond our initial emotionally charged experiences (especially once the sugar-coma wears off). We continue the journey because a resurrection which stops in Jerusalem would never have touched Galilee, Damascus, Corinth, Rome, Las Cruces. We have been looking through Lent and Holy Week toward Easter, in order to reimagine what Lent and Holy Week might mean because they don't stop with days in the dark. And yet, to rush past those days of difficulty is to rob them of their fullness. It is also robbing ourselves of

the opportunity to live in solidarity with those on the margins and the Christ who pitches tent among the lost and lonely and overlooked.

So also we look through Easter toward Pentecost, recognizing that the day of Holy Wind/Breath/Spirit with reinvigorate and recreate our experiences of Easter. And so also, we live the days of Easter as themselves, days of resurrection in which we know not yet to what we are called, but knowing that we are known and claimed as family of the Divine.

Shalom,  
Patrick

PS: If you'd like to have a pastoral visit or chat on the phone, you're welcome to call/text me at (575).551.1717 or email me at my new email address:  
[Rev.Patrick.Crocker@gmail.com](mailto:Rev.Patrick.Crocker@gmail.com).

## *MISSION MOMENT - EL CALVARIO*

*Mike Bureman*

As most of you know, First Christian Church has been supporting El Calvario for a number of years as it has sheltered and processed thousands of asylum seekers on their way to their sponsoring families. We send, & have for several years, a monthly check.

Over the years, many of us have volunteered to help at El Calvario. I still try to volunteer a few hours each week and Aletta continues to bring delicious apple cake.

Recently, El Calvario has embarked on an ambitious capital improvements campaign to make major improvements and additions to the main church building which serves as the shelter, as well to another building that they own a couple of blocks away that will serve as a center for community activities. The building will also house a large commercial kitchen for community members who want to prepare and sell foodstuffs.

Our church board has agreed to match the first \$1,000 that the congregation donates to this capital improvement campaign.

On Sunday, April 14th, Susana Torres, the Shelter Manager, and Nayeli Saenz, assistant Shelter Manager, will be at our services to share more about this campaign.

# COMMUNITY

## *THE JOURNEY*

*Paul Cook*

I think some of you know that I like to write poetry. I've written a bit of haiku at some of our Spiritual Practices meetings before. Some of that I shared with our daughter, who turned part of it into a song. I have enjoyed writing poetry for a long time. Sometimes it just feels like I need to get something out of my system and write it down in the form of poetry. It's kind of like an itch that you just have to scratch. Sometimes I experience things or see things that just drive me to write poetry. Before I ever retired from work, I had a list of things that I wanted to accomplish. One of those things was to publish a book of poetry. I finally completed my book, *Peace in the Moment*. It's the culmination of a lot of work. Peace is something that we sometimes have to struggle to find.

I'm writing about this because like most other things in life, It's about the journey rather than the destination. Don't get me wrong. I'm very excited to have a published book of poetry. But even more fulfilling, was the work getting there. It was the time I got to spend in evenings or afternoons contemplating different things and getting to write about them. It was the time sharing some of that work with friends and getting feedback on it. It was the time I got to spend with our daughter (my editor) working on the poetry, making changes, and getting her thoughts about my writing or having discussions about why one phrase might be better than another. Discussions about which of my photographs might work best with different poems, as well as discussions about the layout and how I wanted to incorporate haiku with the photos and pair them with the other poems. Our daughter challenged me on one of the poems to take more time with it, expand it out, and answer some questions about why.

It was a long process. Initially, I had a number of poems that I had written in the couple of years before. From the point where I told our daughter that I wanted to try to publish a book, it took a little over a year to finish things. I had to write almost half of the poems that I needed for the book in that time. I wrote a lot of haiku. I threw out most of the haiku and started over on them. Some of them I rewrote four or five times before I was happy with them. It was a long refining process where I went through and over things numerous times. Sometimes letting things sit for a while, going back and rereading. Sometimes making more changes, taking out sections and writing new sections, and continually thinking about what it was I was trying to say.



It was much like our journey in faith. We continually have to evaluate where it is that we're going, what is our journey about, how are we relating to the people we encounter along the way. What is it that is important to us? We continually meet with others and get feedback on our viewpoints, and discuss why one phrase might be better than another. And of course, we get challenged to take more time, expand out our thoughts, and answer questions about why. Sometimes we decide that we need to cut out a section and rewrite it. Sometimes we might rewrite a section multiple times because we're struggling to find the right words. It is a long refining process that helps develop us into who we are, and draws us closer to God. I leave you all with this thought on our journey, John 14:27 - Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

## *HOW WRITING HAIKUS IS A SPIRITUAL PRACTICE*

*Esther Devall*

Our Thursday morning Spiritual Practices group schedules haiku writing every couple of months because it deepens our awareness of the Holy Spirit, which enlivens and permeates all of creation. As we sit in silence before writing a haiku, we observe and attend to our natural world in greater detail, and then condense its holy message into a few words. The pattern of a haiku is 3 descriptive lines with 5 syllables, 7 syllables, and 5 syllables each, often taking a surprising new direction or offering an insight in the third line.

Silent beneath prickly sands  
a cold crucible  
cradles the promise of spring.

Warm days and cool nights  
ushered in with gusty winds,  
welcoming the spring.

Fresh buds outside my window  
ocotillo, mesquite  
New color and scent reborn.

Life in the desert:  
The end of winter's darkness  
brings the winds of change.

It's early morning.  
I creep out of the bedroom  
to not wake the doves.

Wrens making straw nests,  
Quail running atop rock walls.  
They work and I watch.

After the dark days  
Comes sunshine and blooms of hope.  
Easter has arrived.

# *EASTER REFLECTION*

*Zanté Garcia*

Who am I that you would die for me?

How often will a person die for another?

A sinner no less, are you sure it was for me?

I cannot bear the thoughts of all you suffered.

Thorns on your head.

Nails pierced through your hands and feet.

Your cries of anguish.

For me, so I would have eternal life?

Such gloom on that day you took your last breath.

But the joy and triumph on that third day.

They came to anoint you, and wondered where you were.

The angel warned not to be afraid.

Death no more, only living.

It's never too late to believe.

Together forever in everlasting light.

I am grateful for your love.

I know who I am now.

I am yours!

# WHO ARE WE?

First Christian Church affirms the Good News of Jesus the Christ as revealed through Scripture, tradition, experience, scholarship, and reason. Within the community of faith, we are called to discern through prayer, study, and discussion God's message for today.



**The Newsletter is published monthly by First Christian Church. It is available free of charge to members and friends of FCC. The purpose of the newsletter is to inform and to inspire, and to invite participation in the life of the congregation, the community, and the world. Submissions are welcome, including announcements of activities of interest to members, prayer concerns, thank-you notes, directory updates, etc. The editor reserves the right to edit for content and space. The due date for submissions is each month on the 25th.**